

Questioned Documents Unit (QDU)

Administrative Structure and Operating Guidelines

1 Scope

This document applies to the Unit Chief, Supervisors, Technical Leader, Examiners, Document Analysts and Contractors assigned to the QDU.

The QDU operates in accordance with the *FBI Laboratory Operations Manual (LOM)* and the *FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual (QAM)*. These manuals are supplemented by the procedures contained in the unit's quality system manuals. All unit personnel will adhere to all relevant FBI Laboratory policies and practices of the LOM, QAM, and QDU quality system documents.

2 Mission, Organization, and Management Structure

The mission of the QDU is to examine forensic document, footwear, and tire evidence collected during an investigation; to report findings, provide testimony, and provide training to the law enforcement community; and to render field support, as necessary, in support of the FBI, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

2.1 The QDU is assigned to the Scientific Analysis Section (SAS) of the FBI Laboratory Division (LD).

2.2 The administrative structure of the QDU is designed to clearly define a chain-of-command and to establish a list of responsibilities and duties.

2.3 The QDU is comprised of a unit chief (UC), supervisory document analyst-forensic examiners (also referred to as supervisors), technical leaders (TL), document analyst-forensic examiners (also referred to as examiners), document analysts (also referred to as analysts or technicians), Redacted

2.3.1 Supervisors, technical leaders, and members of the Footwear and Tire Group report directly to the UC.

2.3.2 Examiners and analysts report directly to their assigned supervisor.

2.3.3 Contractors report directly to the UC.

2.4 QDU examiners perform examinations in one of two disciplines. These two disciplines are Document Examination and Impressions (footwear and tire).

2.4.1 Analysts assist examiners assigned to the Footwear and Tire Group, Questioned Documents Group, or the pool system.

2.4.2 Analysts support all examiners who perform document examinations. Analysts are primarily responsible for processing cases for the examiners but may also work with databases and/or perform administrative tasks for the unit.

2.5 Both disciplines in the QDU have a TL.

2.5.1 The TLs will notify the UC when issues arise concerning technical operations within their discipline.

2.6 Redacted

2.7 The current assignment roster is maintained by the UC.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Unit Chief

- Oversees the daily operations of the unit, including hiring, budget, unit programs, liaison, new technologies, training, and proficiency testing.
- Performs administrative reviews of Laboratory reports.
- Makes critical evaluations on the acceptance of cases in the unit.
- Maintains the cases received in the unit via Forensic Advantage and/or a database.
- Conducts annual Performance Appraisal Reviews on all unit employees who report directly to them.
- Observes and evaluates activities of personnel on a regular basis.
- Sets performance measures by which the unit's mission is fulfilled.
- Maintains regular contact with the SAS Chief.
- Handles special projects from the SAS Chief.
- Provides and recommends formal training opportunities for employees to ensure continuing education.
- Oversees unit meetings.
- Attends regular SAS meetings.
- Maintains direct contact with other appropriate units within the LD.
- Maintains contact with other appropriate units within the FBI.
- Prepares written and oral communications in conjunction with the field, other divisions, and the law enforcement community.
- Maintains, expands, and improves liaison contacts to enhance the attainment of unit performance measures.

- Provides 24-hour availability to address national and international crises.
- Manages assigned programs according to FBI/DOJ policies, guidelines, and procedures.
- Ensures that the QDU complies with all FBI and LD policies.
- Ensures that the QDU's quality assurance program complies with the QAM and LOM requirements.
- Ensures that one qualified individual is designated to serve as TL in each discipline.
- Ensures that the assignment of casework is distributed to examiners based on expertise and caseload.
- Ensures the examiner contacts the contributor every 60 calendar days the evidence has been in QDU and no examinations have been conducted. Approves corrective actions prior to submission to the Forensic Analysis Support Unit (FASU), if required. Corrective actions may not be submitted to FASU without the prior approval of a TL from that discipline.
- Authorizes and approves minor deviations from non-technical procedures.
- Authorizes and approves major deviations prior to submission to FASU. Deviations to technical procedures may not be submitted to FASU without the prior approval of a TL from that discipline.
- Ensures an annual review is performed of the unit's quality system, including the technical procedures in each discipline, training, and proficiency testing.

3.2 Supervisor

- Serves as a direct supervisor of assigned unit personnel.
- Conducts annual Performance Appraisal Reviews on all unit employees who report directly to them.
- Ensures compliance with current unit and LD policies, practices, and procedures.
- Performs technical reviews of casework in their discipline.
- Performs administrative reviews of Laboratory reports, if requested by the UC.
- Observes and evaluates activities of employees who report directly to them on a regular basis.
- Communicates recommendations to the UC of assigned unit personnel who have exemplary performance and have earned recognition (e.g., awards and rewards). Conversely, responsible for informing the UC of assigned unit personnel with poor attendance, poor work performance, and behavioral problems.
- Maintains competency in Document Examination or Impressions (footwear and tire) discipline through annual proficiency tests.
- Receives, assesses, and examines evidentiary material, ensuring the integrity of the evidence is maintained while in their custody.

- Conducts critical evaluation of evidence in order to properly manage examinations performed on cases.
- Performs comprehensive and authoritative analyses of evidence.
- Provides technical leadership and communication with contributors in regard to case acceptance and feasibility of requested examinations.
- Prepares case notes, Laboratory reports, and other relevant communications to document facts pertaining to evidence received, analyses performed, procedures used, and the significance of the results obtained.
- Researches, develops, and validates new technical procedures for use in casework.
- Prepares and presents ideas, recommendations, conclusions and analytical procedures to peers, superiors, subordinates and the public, including courtroom testimony.
- Mentors new employees in their area of expertise.
- Represents the FBI Laboratory with respect to the collection, submission, and examination of evidence, as well as courtroom testimony.
- Provides support and analyses at major crime scenes, when needed.
- Provides 24-hour availability to address national and international crises.
- Handles special projects assigned by the UC.
- Serves as acting UC, when designated.

3.3 Technical Leader

- Accountable for technical operations within their discipline, including training, quality assurance, proficiency testing, and validation.
- Authorizes suspension/termination of operations within their discipline if it is determined that current casework operations have been compromised. If it becomes necessary to suspend operations, they must notify the UC, and are responsible for documenting the situation in an electronic communication (EC) to inform executive management.
- Approves unit technical documents (e.g., standard operating procedures, documents related to training and testimony) before issuance.
- Provides oversight to the research, development, and validation of new technical procedures for use in casework within their discipline.
- Ensures compliance with current unit and LD policies, practices, and procedures.
- Provides technical expertise and approval to UC for major deviations and corrective actions.
- Maintains competency in Document Examination or Impressions (footwear and tire) discipline through annual proficiency tests.
- Ensures that examiners and analysts in their discipline are qualified and authorized for their assigned work responsibilities in accordance with the QAM and LOM requirements.
- Serves as an SME for court testimony monitoring for their discipline.

- May delegate their duties to a qualified examiner in the same discipline, but the final work product remains the responsibility of the TL.
- Serves as an examiner in their discipline.
- Provides 24-hour availability to address national and international crises.
- Trains and mentors new employees in their area of expertise.
- Serves as acting UC, when designated.
- Serves as program manager for the Blind Verification Procedures in QDU for their discipline.

3.4 Examiner

- Ensures compliance with current unit and LD policies, practices, and procedures.
- Maintains competency in Document Examination or Impressions (footwear and tire) discipline through annual proficiency tests.
- Receives, assesses, and examines evidentiary material, ensuring the integrity of the evidence is maintained while in their custody.
- Conducts critical evaluation of evidence in order to properly manage examinations performed on cases.
- Performs comprehensive and authoritative analyses of evidence.
- Provides technical leadership and communication with contributors regarding case acceptance and feasibility of requested examinations.
- Prepares case notes, Laboratory reports, and other relevant communications to document facts pertaining to evidence received, analyses performed, procedures used, and the significance of the results obtained.
- Maintains the chain of custody and ensures technical accuracy of casework.
- Performs technical review of Laboratory reports in their discipline, if requested by the UC or a supervisor.
- Performs administrative review of Laboratory reports, if requested by the UC.
- Researches, develops, and validates new technical procedures and equipment for use in casework.
- Prepares and presents ideas, recommendations, conclusions and analytical procedures to peers, superiors, subordinates and the public, including courtroom testimony.
- Trains and mentors new employees in their area of expertise.
- Represents the FBI Laboratory with respect to the collection, submission, and examination of evidence, as well as courtroom testimony.
- Mentors, reviews daily work, and evaluates performance of trainees assigned to them for casework.
- Provides support and analyses at major crime scenes.
- Manages a major program within the unit (GS-14 only), where applicable.
- Provides 24-hour availability to address national and international crises.
- Handles special projects assigned by the UC.

- Serves as acting UC, when designated.

3.5 Analyst

- Ensures compliance with current unit and LD policies, practices, and procedures.
- Provides technical and operational assistance to examiners in the unit.
- Conducts preliminary case preparation including administrative paperwork, and imaging of evidence.
- Maintains the chain of custody and ensures technical accuracy of preliminary casework, ensuring the integrity of the evidence is maintained while in their custody.
- Performs database searches, indented writing examinations, watermark searches, and typewriting classifications under the direction of an examiner.
- Inventories evidence, provides check-in notes, and acknowledges receipt of the case under the direction of an examiner.
- Transfers evidence as directed to the Operational Projects Unit.
- Provides appropriate records pertaining to the preliminary examinations performed on evidence received, results obtained, and procedures used.
- Prepares and presents ideas, recommendations, database results, and analytical procedures to peers, superiors, and the public, including courtroom testimony.
- Provides 24-hour availability to address national and international crises.
- Trains and mentors new employees in their area of expertise.
- Handles special projects assigned by the UC.
- Assists in maintenance of databases.
- Conducts performance checks on appropriate unit equipment.
- Assists examiners in trial preparation by creating courtroom exhibits.
- Assists examiners in preparation of discovery requests.
- Maintains competency in Document Examination and/or Impressions (footwear and tire) discipline(s) through annual proficiency tests.
- Performs administrative duties in support of the unit, as assigned.
- Performs related duties, as required.
- Returns evidence to other units and mails evidence to contributors.

3.6 Redacted

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4 Personnel Matters

4.1 All unit personnel are presented with an annual performance appraisal review by their immediate supervisor. Each employee is also presented with a mid-year performance review.

4.2 Requests for sick leave, annual leave, compensatory leave, overtime, and leave without pay are approved by the UC or the employee's supervisor.

4.3 Training opportunities, presentations, participation in schools, unit tours, and other matters must be approved by the UC or supervisor.

4.4 Travel vouchers will be reviewed and approved by the UC or a UC from another unit.

4.5 Annually, all unit personnel must meet the required hours of continuing education as set forth by the FBI LD and the QDU.

4.5.1 Each QDU employee will ensure their continuing education hours are documented in Virtual Academy. Each training opportunity that is not mandated by the FBI or the LD must be approved by the student's immediate supervisor.

5 Field Office Assistance/Crime Scene Response

5.1 Requests for QDU assistance at crime scenes must be directed to the UC of the Evidence Response Team Unit. These requests must be approved by the QDU Unit Chief who must also seek approval from the SAS Chief.

5.2 Requests for QDU participation in a Hazardous Evidence Analysis Team deployment or exercise must be directed to the QDU Unit Chief, and from the Unit Chief of the Scientific Response and Analysis Unit.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
3	09/26/19	1 Scope, second paragraph deleted “policies, practices, and.” Section 2.3.1 added “s” to leader and “group.” Section 2.3.2 grammar correction. Section 2.4.1 reworded paragraph “Analysts assist examiners assigned to the Footwear and Tire Group, Questioned Documents Group or the pool system. Section 2.4.2 deleted “in the CPC.” Section 3.2 seventh bullet deleted “outstanding” added “exemplary.” Section 3.2 deleted bullet “Serves as an SME for court testimony monitoring for his/her category of testing.” Section 3.4, eleventh bullet added “equipment.” Section 3.4 deleted bullet “Serves as an SME for court testimony monitoring for his/her category of testing.” Section 3.5, seventh bullet deleted “Forensic Imaging Unit”, added “Operational Projects Unit.” Section 3.5 added bullet “Return evidence to other units and mail evidence to contributors.” Deleted section 4.5.2, evaluation of effectiveness of continuing education training is no longer required.”
4	04/15/21	Throughout the document made general grammatical changes, substituted “his/her” and “him/her” with “their” and “them”, and updated “category of testing” to “discipline”. Also updated title of disciplines to match ANAB Scope throughout the document. Updated section 2 to reflect current mission statement. In section 2.3.1, changed “footwear/tire tread group” to “members of the Footwear and Tire Group”. In section 2.4, removed “also referred to as” and “impression examination”. In section 2.5.1, removed “the” and changed “of” to “within”. In section 3.1, second bullet, added “s” after “review”, under the eighth bullet removed “impression examinations”, under the third to last bullet changed “to” to “from” and “SOPs” to “procedures” and added “non-” in front of “technical”, and in the last bullet removed “standard operating”. In section 3.3, under the third bullet removed the second sentence, under the fourth bullet changed “Manages” to “Provides oversight to”, under the seventh bullet removed “impression examinations”, under the eighth bullet added “and authorized”, under the eleventh bullet changed “the discipline in which they are the TL” to “their discipline”, added the twelfth bullet, and under the last bullet added “for their discipline”. In section 3.4, in the second bullet, removed “impression examinations”, and in the sixth bullet changed “in regard to” to “regarding”. In the title of section 3.5, removed “Document” from “Document Analyst”, in the third bullet moved “and” and removed “creating a permanent record”, added the tenth bullet, and in the seventeenth bullet of section 3.5, removed “impression evidence”. Moved the clause in bullet 6 of section 3.5 to the end of the sentence. In section 3.6, in the second bullet added “, other

document examinations,” and in the second to last bullet added “,
and any other examinations they have been authorized to conduct in
casework,”.

Redacted - Signatures on File

Approval

Questioned Documents
Unit Chief

Date: 04/14/2021

Questioned Documents
Technical Leader

Date: 04/14/2021

Footwear/Tire Tread
Technical Leader

Date: 04/14/2021

QA Approval

Quality Manager

Date: 04/14/2021